



# AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE UNION LITERARY SOCIETY

OF

MIAMI UNIVERSITY,

AT ITS THIRTEENTH ANNUAL CELEBRATION,

AUGUST 8TH, 1838.

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BY JOHN C. YOUNG,  
President of Centre College.



OXFORD:  
PRINTED BY W. W. BISHOP.  
1838.



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Book 17









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UNION HALL, AUGUST 9, 1838.

REV. SIR :—

In the name of the Union Literary Society, we tender to you their sincere thanks for the very eloquent and appropriate Address delivered before them yesterday afternoon ; and solicit a copy of the same for publication.      Very respectfully,

Yours,

B. W. CONOVER, }  
R. H. SMITH,      }  
HENRY SNOW,      } *Com.*

REV. J. C. YOUNG.

DANVILLE, OCTOBER 20, 1838.

GENTLEMEN :—

I have written off, as soon as my circumstances would permit, the substance of the speech of which you requested a copy. I only regret that the truths which it exhibits, have not found an abler advocate.

Yours, &c.

JOHN C. YOUNG.

Messrs. CONOVER, SMITH & SNOW.

## ADDRESS.

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### RECTITUDE IN NATIONAL POLICY ESSENTIAL TO NATIONAL PROSPERITY.

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OUR national existence commenced under circumstances admirably adapted to fasten upon us a lively and abiding conviction of the worth of national justice,—to make us a people who would love righteousness, and hate oppression. A long succession of injuries, under which we had appealed and remonstrated in vain, forced us reluctantly into an assumption of independence. The evils under which we had, for years, patiently groaned and petitioned, as well as the aggravated horrors of an unnatural war, endured during our struggle for freedom, had all been felt to be the bitter consequences of a want of rectitude in the people with whom we had been connected. Thus the moral deformity of national injustice was impressively exhibited to us in our own sufferings, while its impolicy was as strikingly visible in the loss to its contemners of millions of subjects and an empire of territory.

When we had come forth from the trying contest and assumed our position among the nations of the earth, we felt and acted as those who believed, that there was a God in heaven who judged nations as well as individuals; that there was reality and force in moral distinctions; and that the laws of virtue and religion, bound men no less strongly to obedience

when acting collectively as a people than when acting separately as individuals. An enunciation of important political truths,—a declaration of the inalienable rights of man, was not then regarded as a rhetorical flourish,—but as an exhibition of the universal principles on which constitutions should be framed, laws enacted, and administrations conducted. Acting in conformity with these views and feelings, our fathers framed the constitution of the Federal Government and their various State constitutions, on those just principles, which have made the career of our nation an astonishment to mankind. In the influence of these principles and the policy flowing from them, is to be found the cause of our unparalleled prosperity. Physical advantages equal, or nearly equal, to ours have been enjoyed by other nations—but freedom of conscience, equal political and civil rights, a foreign policy generally pacific, a legislation aiming to promote the interests of all, an abolition of all exclusive and invidious social privileges, as primogeniture and hereditary rank, with provision more or less ample, in most parts of our land, for popular education,—these constitute a combination of propitious moral causes, such as never before acted on any people. In but one point our forefathers failed to carry out the principles of justice—and that solitary failure, the extent and permanency of whose consequences they could not have foreseen, we all now regard as the chief source of danger to our prosperous Republic.

The days of the revolution have now long gone by, and the generation, who learned the lessons so forcibly taught in those days, have been gathered to their fathers. A new race has sprung up—and many things in our present history remind us of what befel the Israelites after their miraculous deliverance from Egypt and settlement in Canaan. “The people,” it is recorded, “served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel—but there arose another generation after them which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of

the people that were round about them.” The lessons of experience are always more impressive than those of tradition—and, like the Jews of old, we are in danger of forgetting or disregarding the principles of our fathers. Cradled as we are in abundance, unpractised in self-denial, unawed by superior power, it would not be strange, if that prosperity which has so often ruined nations as well as individuals, should prove our destruction. There is a growing disposition evinced among us to adopt those courses of public policy, which seek their justification not in rectitude but in expediency. Unless this tendency be counteracted, we must perish in our own corruption. Could, however, the educated youth of our country, as they issue, year after year, in successive bands, from our halls of learning, carry with them, amid their stores of scientific and literary knowledge, sound principles of political morality, to govern their conduct as citizens and statesmen, the clouds that lour on our horizon would soon be dispersed, and our sun would shine brighter and brighter until the perfect day. You, gentlemen, constitute a portion of that class whose influence will soon shape the course of our policy. Though you will not all be *statesmen*, you will all be *citizens*—and your habits of reflection and reasoning, as well as your acquisitions of knowledge, will give weight to your opinions and actions, in whatever stations you are placed, and on whatever subjects you are called upon to speak and to act. I avail myself, therefore, of the opportunity which your invitation has furnished, to aim at some higher object than the mere gratification of your literary taste. I shall feel fully satisfied if, by a simple and brief discussion, I can succeed in lodging in your minds, as a practical maxim for your guidance in future life, the great principle that, *Rectitude in national policy is essential to national prosperity.*

This is not a new truth which we are endeavoring to bring to light—it is one which Demosthenes, long since, recognized, when he exclaimed, “Οὐ γάρ εστιν—οὐκ εστιν, ω αὐδης Αθηναῖς, αδικουντα, καὶ επιτορκουντα, καὶ φειδομενον, διναμιν βεβαιηγηκτοσθαί” αλλα τα τοιαυτα εις μεν απεξ καὶ βραχιν χρονον αντεχεις καὶ σφραδι γε πιθησεν επι ταis ελπισιν, αν τυχην τω χρονω δε φωρισται, καὶ περι αυτα καταπει. Οπτηρ γαρ οικιας, ομηρι, καὶ πλοιου, καὶ των αλλων των τοιουτων, τα κατωθειν ισχυροτατα ειναι δει, ουτω καὶ των πραξεων τας αρχας καὶ τας υποθεσεις αλιθεις καὶ δικαιας ειναι προσπηκει? It is the same truth which a greater

than Demosthenes announced, when, by the inspired penman, he recorded the maxim, "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is the reproach of any people." Unfortunately, however, the great portion of mankind in every age, the wise and noble, as well as the mean and ignorant, seem to have never discovered it. Every moral truth suffers occasional obscuration,—our self-interest, at times, intercepts its rays and shuts out its light from our eyes. But there are some truths which labor under *an almost perpetual and total eclipse*. This is one of the number; for luminous as we trust it will appear to us, those who control the destinies of nations rarely show signs of its recognition. Rulers and people have seldom acted as though they believed that, in questions of policy, justice should be the rule of their conduct. The atrocious sentiment, so long and so universally avowed and acted upon as a maxim of international law, that "nothing which is expedient is unjust," seems to have influenced nearly the whole internal as well as external policy of nations. Whatever advantage could be gained, through intrigue or force, by one people over another, or by one class of the same people over a different class, they have felt themselves authorized to seize. The ordinary laws of morality have been considered as inapplicable to political transactions; and a man is often considered an unimpeachable statesman, who, if he conducted his private business on the same principles which govern his political course, would be regarded as base and flagitious—would be branded with infamy, and cast forth in scorn from society. To lie, and cheat, and plunder, in behalf of himself or any other individual, will consign a man to disgrace and punishment—to perpetrate the same crimes, in behalf of a nation, will entitle him to honors and rewards. Wholesale swindling and robbery are honorable and commendable, while swindling and robbery by retail are mean and execrable. Vice is seen to be deformed and vile only when it is contracted in its dimensions—when it covers a country and rises to mountain height, it acquires, in many eyes, a grandeur, which hides its deformity.

Codes of morality have been adjusted to this corrupt theory—general principles of right have been drawn from the

flagitious usages of statesmen—and on the absurd plea that God has not given any directions for regulating the conduct of men in their public and most important acts, they have invented a diplomatic Bible, based on principles earthly, sensual, and devilish—a code whose rules of duty recognized not the *rights* but the *mights* of man.

In looking at the history of international law and the science of legislation, we are not, however, without encouragement. We can observe some amelioration both in principle and practice, arising, partly, from the extending influence of christian morality working its way into every department of life; partly, from the clearer perception of the impolicy of iniquity, which the world is daily acquiring from experience—and we cannot but hope, in spite of our own national defections, that the time is not distant when it will be universally held, that the maxims of expediency are as unwise as they are sinful; that the choice of proper objects of policy and the adoption of moral means for their attainment, are indispensable to a nation's prosperity.

It would, indeed, be strange, that under the dominion of a wise and almighty, as well as holy, Being, the course of rectitude should not be the course of success,—it would be strange, that He who created all objects, endued them with their peculiar properties, and fixed their laws of operation, should not have created such a harmony between the natural and moral world as to ensure a decided and permanent advantage to those who respect his authority, seek his direction, and submit to his commands. Though it is inconsistent with the nature of our present state of trial that either individual or national transgressions should be, *immediately* and *invariably*, followed by a just recompence of reward, still our belief in the goodness of the Ruler of the universe, unsupported by any other argument, would lead us to the firm conclusion that he would, even here, encourage virtue and frown upon vice, in the very arrangements of nature, and that his ordinary providential adjustments would warn men of the folly of disobedience, and foreshadow the thick horrors of eternal retribution. It would

require strong reasons to induce in us the belief that the principles which God approves will not conduce to man's highest enjoyment even in this life, and that the principles which he abhors will not ruin those who adopt them.

We are not, however, left to infer from the attributes of the Divine Sovereign, the issues of that rectitude, which consists in the pursuit of the proper objects of national policy and the adoption of virtuous means for their attainment. "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you"—and "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," are precepts of the Divine Lawgiver, as capable of application by nations as individuals, and their observance in public policy constitutes national rectitude. We shall endeavor to point out the various modes in which the observance of these principles exerts a benign influence in developing and fostering all the elements of national prosperity.

A nation is truly great and happy, when it possesses an *independent existence, the respect of mankind, wealth, intelligence, morality and religion.* These then are the *elements of national happiness,* and on each of these does the adoption of sound moral principles, in the guidance of public affairs, exert a powerful and salutary influence.

1. *Political rectitude does much to secure to a nation its independent existence.* "The bloody and deceitful man shall not live out half his days," is the assertion of holy writ—not a prophecy, but an inspired declaration of the natural consequences of all falsehood and violence. The turbulent and intriguing, whether nations or individuals, are ever engaged in schemes which excite animosity, bring them into collision with others, cause their existence to be regarded as a nuisance, and often produce combined and protracted efforts for their destruction. They are constantly tempting their fate, for the failure of any of their plans is the signal for onset to all who watch and long for their downfall. The ambitious policy of the Grecian Republics, and its unhappy result, are thus emphatically recorded by an ancient historian,—"*Græciæ civitates, dum imperare singulæ cupiunt, imperium omnes perdidérunt*"—while each aimed at ruling, all became enslaved.

And I know not that the annals of the world have ever shown a nation which has perished, that has not furnished, by its fraud, perfidy, or violence, the occasion of its own ruin. Nations are seldom so ruffianlike as to strike without a plausible pretext. By the very laws of our moral nature, strict integrity throws around its possessors a magic influence—it draws around them a charmed circle, which no one can approach without awe, which no one can overpass, for hostile purposes, without a sensible diminution of confidence and power—with out a quailing of the heart and paralysis of the hand, that prepare them to be victims of their own iniquity. A country is, therefore, rarely harassed by aggressions, threatening its independence yet entirely unprovoked. When such a case occurs, the sympathies of mankind are usually enlisted in behalf of the innocent. The invader is abashed and scared back by the powers and remonstrances of an indignant world, which assail him, more and more fearfully, at every successive step of his advance—he feels that his character will be blasted and his own existence imperilled by perseverance, for, bad as mankind are, he knows that every individual instinctively hates and repels all injustice *but his own*.

But independently of this double shield of apprehension and sympathy which a nation's rectitude opposes to all assaults upon its independence, there are internal powers of resistance, fostered and strengthened by a righteous policy, that will enable it to repel almost any force that can ever be brought against it. Livy, in detailing the amount of troops raised and sent forth, for several successive years, from certain small districts of Italy, guards against the incredulity of his readers, by reminding them, that in those early days of independence and economy, multitudes of freemen subsisted on spots, which, in his time, supported only small gangs of slaves. The system of domestic bondage had not then spread over the land, impoverishing the soil and wasting its inhabitants. Had Italy, in the days of the *Empire*, contained the same amount of population, which it nourished in the early ages of the *Republic*, the wave of barbarian invasion would never have swept over its fair fields. Before it could be subjected to a foreign yoke, the

number of its inhabitants had been diminished by a policy, that subverted the first principles of justice. Nor is numerical weakness the only mischievous consequence of this policy. An oppressed class can never feel that their interests are identified with their country's independence; for her subjugation *only changes their masters*—it only shifts the rod of their oppression into other hands. In resisting invasion, then, their efforts will be feeble, as must ever be the efforts of men who feel that they are defending the property and rights of *others*, not *their own*—the property and rights, too, of others who are withholding from themselves what is justly their due. But when the rights of all are protected, and the interests of all promoted, national subjugation is regarded by each individual as involving his personal degradation, as well as the destruction of all his hopes and enjoyments. When the foundations of a people's existence are thus laid in righteousness, they can scarcely ever be overturned. There is a deep and unquenchable spirit glowing silently and secretly in the heart of every citizen, drawing sustenance and energy from every strong principle of our nature, which flames up at the approach of an invading foe, and defends the country like a wall of living fire.

Earth has been the scene of many revolutions. Empire after empire has risen and moved in splendid pageantry across the stage of existence—each has become enfeebled, not by its increasing magnitude, as is sometimes falsely imagined, but by its increasing iniquity; and each has been driven into darkness and the abyss by a successor, stronger, because, for the time, less corrupt than itself. No nation has disappeared in whose history we cannot trace the moral causes of its destruction—we feel that it deserved to perish, for we can see the unjust principles of policy which naturally produced its catastrophe.

2. *The respect of mankind is an element of national prosperity secured by the observance of a righteous policy.* Designed for social intercourse, we are so constituted as to delight in the esteem and approbation of our fellow men. The views which others take of our characters, affect us so strongly, that *no external advantages* can compensate for their contempt or hatred—and it is even regarded as the highest effort

of virtue to risk the scorn of men for the approbation of conscience and the friendship of God. As it is with individuals so is it with nations—the respect of men is an important item in the sum of those advantages, which constitute a nation's means of happiness. It is not only a defence and security to national independence, but, it furnishes a real and elevating enjoyment to every individual of the mighty mass—each feels that *his* character is mingled with that of his country, and each feels ennobled by membership in a community that the world honors.

Men may fear us for our prowess—they may court us for our capabilities of serving their selfish interests—they may admire us for our science, literature, or arts—but our integrity alone can command their reverence. There is a natural and involuntary homage which all men pay to virtue—they feel its power and bow before its majesty—and they will honor those who are its true votaries, though they may themselves be too weak and depraved to join their respected band. Vice, when it wishes to be respected, must disguise itself, and assume the garb of virtue. Nations as well as individuals, have rarely the audacity to avow that they act on principles which justice utterly condemns. Rather than expose their conduct in its naked deformity, they will throw over it the flimsiest veil of sophistry or cant—thus, even in the perpetration of iniquity, testifying indirectly, to the worth and nobility of rectitude.

What are the records on the classic page of ancient Greece, which stir up our souls even in this distant age and clime? what are the recollections which, despite the superstitions and crimes of her children, make us feel that this ancient land is still worthy of a place in the eye and heart of mankind? They are the records and recollections of those rare but illustrious vindications of the great and noble principles of justice which were there witnessed—those occasional testimonies, often sealed with their blood, given by her statesmen and heroes to the rights of man. The breathing statues of Greece may be all defaced by time; her paintings, the triumph of art, may moulder; her temples, once the glory of architecture, may be demolished by barbarian violence or crumbled by the touch of

time, cumbering the earth with heaps of unsightly rubbish—still the memory of her Epaminondas and Timoleon, her Solon, her Aristides, and her Leonidas, will survive to consecrate the land.

“ The waters murmur of their name ;  
 The woods are peopled with their fame ;  
 The silent pillar, lone and gray,  
 Claims kindred with their sacred clay ;  
 Their spirits wrap the dusky mountain,  
 Their memory sparkles o'er the fountain ;  
 The meanest rill, the mightiest river,  
 Roll mingling with their fame forever.  
 Despite of every yoke she bears,  
 That land is glory's still and their's !  
 When man would do a deed of worth,  
 He points to Greece, and turns to tread,  
 So sanctioned on the tyrant's head ;  
 He looks to her and rushes on,  
 Where life is lost or freedom won.”

Why is the British patriot proud of his country's untiring efforts, for upwards of thirty years, in the suppression of the detestable traffic in African slaves? Why does he point exultingly to the hundred millions of dollars paid by England to her West Indian colonists, to redeem 800,000 slaves from bondage? He feels that such sacrifices of temporary interest, in the vindication of the great principles of justice and philanthropy, are the brightest gems in the diadem of his country's glory. He feels that time will only improve the lustre of these exploits, while the increase of moral light will gradually pale the glories of her Blenheim, her Waterloo, and her Trafalgar. Acts like these will force their way, even through prejudice and rivalry, to the hearts of men, and will ever command their admiration and respect. Napoleon felt this, when he expressed his belief, that his active concurrence in measures for the suppression of the slave trade, would effect much in removing the deep-rooted dislike of the English towards him. How strong a testimony does the declaration of this eagle-eyed statesman bear, to the value of an exhibition of justice and benevolence, in conciliating the esteem of nations.

The sentiments expressed by mankind in reference to ourselves, teach us that respect ebbs and flows with the increase and decline of national virtue. The principles embodied in our constitution, presented us to the world as a nation whose whole existence and policy were based upon the acknowledged laws of justice; and our early career was consistent with these professions. Coveting the possessions and infringing upon the rights of no other people, the steady aim of our government seemed to be, to secure the interests of all portions of our extended community by measures honorable and just. The effect of this exhibition was, to secure not only honor but imitation. Philanthropists in every land revered and extolled our nation, as one whose rise fixed the commencement of a new era in the history of man. The gospel of human rights was to receive its illustration and commendation in our career. The character of no nation ever conciliated so much esteem, and the conduct of no nation ever, in so short a time, exerted so happy an influence upon the world. And to what do those appeal who would *now* lower our character and lessen our influence? To our departures from the pure principles which we profess. The lawless cupidity with which we clutch the rich possessions of a weak and unoffending neighbor; the mob-violence which is permitted to stalk through the land destroying freedom of speech and freedom of the press; the perpetuation, without serious effort for its removal, of a system of slavery that deprives millions among us of rights which we have acknowledged to be inalienable; with our harsh and oppressive treatment of those dependent tribes whom we have exiled from homes as dear to them as our firesides are to us—these are topics, on which the defenders of the abuses and iniquities that are perpetrated in other lands, dilate with exultation. “Art thou also become like unto us?” is the spirit of the jeers and taunts with which they assail us. Our past conduct is ascribed to the pressure of circumstances, not to the force of conscience—to the absence of temptation, not to the presence of virtue. No one acquainted with the recent politics and literature of Europe, but has felt, and if he is a patriot or philanthropist, has deeply lamented, that our national character has

suffered greatly from the relaxation of our principles. We are looked upon as a nation that is fast descending from the lofty moral eminence which we once occupied.

3. *Political rectitude augments national wealth.* When the internal policy of a people is regulated according to the principles of justice, the activity, energy, and economy of every class in society are developed to the utmost; as each citizen is protected in his property as well as person, by those judicial and political safeguards, which enable him to feel that the acquisitions of his industry are securely his own, and that they can be alienated from him only by his own voluntary act. No sense of insecurity damps his ardor in the pursuit of property—no contrivances for concealing his growing wealth from the prying eye or withdrawing it from the rapacious hand of irresponsible power, distract his mind and divide his efforts. He plans and toils with energy and pleasure, for he feels that all his acquisitions belong to himself, and that he can transmit them securely to be inherited, after he is gone, by those who are dear to him as life.

A righteous and wise legislation will effect much for a country's prosperity by wielding the resources of government, not for the attainment of objects that merely gratify the pride of the nation or favor the interests of a few, but for the creation of new sources of national wealth or the removal of formidable obstacles to its accumulation. Plans for accomplishing these objects, while they are often too gigantic for individual enterprise, are within the easy grasp of national ability; and are productive, when executed, of immense and perpetual gain. If half the expenditures which have been lavished, in many enlightened countries, on schemes devised only for gratifying the rapacity of a privileged class, or rewarding the services of political partisans; for supporting standing armies, and favored religious establishments; for constructing and repairing fortifications, and building ships of war, the necessity for which arises only from our adoption of principles the reverse of those we are advocating;—if half these expenditures had been incurred in opening and improving channels of trade, and in fostering those arts and sciences, whose inventions and discove-

ries extract enjoyments for man out of objects naturally disgusting, and create wealth out of the dust, the picture of physical beauty that would be now presented by these lands, would almost realize our conceptions of Eden in its early bloom.

The political institutions of a country may be radically unjust, and productive of social arrangements of extreme inequality and oppression, yet its natural advantages may be so great as to yield, in spite of these counteracting causes, considerable wealth to its inhabitants. But even this inferior amount of wealth will be so distributed as to produce the least amount of human happiness. In a country whose political institutions and social arrangements are thus at war with equity, a few are aggrandized, while the multitude are impoverished. Splendor and squalor look each other in the face, in hideous contrast—luxury and penury sit side by side, in mutual and dangerous abhorrence. The crash of society must inevitably result from this unequal pressure of the ills of life, and this unequal distribution of its enjoyments. The catastrophe must come sooner or later, for the haggard and oppressed multitude will not always remain quiet under evils from which they see others exempt, and in sight of benefits in which they never can participate.

We may illustrate the influence of a righteous policy in giving stimulus to the energy and scope to the enterprise which augment wealth, by comparing the annual products of a people whose domestic institutions are founded on the principles of justice, with those of another people whose institutions are founded on the principles of a temporary and wrongful expediency. Official returns show the annual product of Massachusetts industry to be upwards of ninety-one millions of dollars. The avails of her commerce and some of her chief agricultural operations, are not included in these returns; and if given, they would swell the amount beyond one hundred millions. The cotton crop of the South, for the same year, was worth about sixty millions; and as all the other products of the cotton-growing region do not equal, in value, their staple article, we will overrate rather than underrate them, when we add forty millions to the value of the cotton crop to ascertain the

value of the whole annual product of the region. Thus we see that the annual proceeds of labor in Massachusetts and in the cotton-growing portion of the South, are about equal. But the population of Massachusetts was, by the last census, only seven hundred thousand, while that of the region, with which its products are compared, was two millions five hundred thousand. Thus, with inferior advantages of soil and climate, the population of Massachusetts raise more than threefold the amount of produce raised by an equal number of the inhabitants of seven States and one Territory in the South. We need not digress from our subject to explain the peculiar process by which this unjust policy works out its injurious effects. The ignorance, carelessness, and indolence of a servile class not only prevent the exertion of their own muscular powers to the best advantage, but also prostrate all efforts to introduce successfully into the country they occupy, those numerous labor-saving machines, which, while they immensely increase the powers of man in every department of industry, require a degree of skill and attention for their management which can never be found among slaves. Take any other countries whose institutions thus contrast with each other—examine their censuses and the returns of their industry—and the results of the comparison will be similar to those we have just exhibited.

Another striking illustration of the cost of immoral policy is presented in the expenditures which mankind incur for war. Nations are very rarely obliged to arm in *strict self-defence*—and morality does not *now* pretend to justify war undertaken for any other cause than that of absolute self-preservation. *Yet the great mass of expenditures, even in peaceful times, are for purposes of war.* Great Britain, in her unrighteous attempt to retain our country in colonial subjection, lavished six hundred millions of dollars. In twenty years of war, ending in 1817, she spent, on an average, one million, one hundred and forty-three thousand four hundred and forty-four dollars (\$1,143,444,) per day—the sum total of the war expenses of twenty years was upwards of eight thousand millions of dollars, (\$8,000,000,000.) And morality looks in vain for any

justifying cause of these costly hostilities—sagacity searches in vain to discover any real advantage which has been derived from them. The unjust policy of the kings and ministers of Europe, in interfering with the internal affairs of France during the progress of her revolution,—in attempting to hinder a free people from exercising the right of changing their form of government to suit themselves—this unjust policy kindled a war which involved all Europe in its flames, and which raged, with scarcely an interval of abatement, for twenty-two years. The object of this war was not attained. France now enjoys a constitution as liberal as that against which the European potentates at first combined. But the attempt to gain their object cost the people whom they ruled, fifteen thousand millions of dollars. If the sum expended in these twenty-two years of war, could be heaped together in gold and silver, it would raise a metallic mound six or eight times the size of the pile that would be formed by gathering together all the coin now circulating through the whole world.

Nor is the infatuation, which produces this waste of wealth, confined to the cabinets of kings. Self-governed nations, led astray by a love of false glory, or a spirit of retaliation, pursue the same warlike policy, in defiance of the dictates of a sound morality. Our own expenditures for war, from 1791 till 1833, amounted to eight hundred and five millions of dollars (\$805,000,000,)—during the same period, our expenditures for the civil list amounted to thirty-seven millions of dollars (\$37,000,000.) Thus we paid more than twenty times the sum in preparing for war and carrying it on, during those forty-two years, that we paid in securing what are the great objects of government, domestic tranquility and the administration of justice. No moralist can justify, either on the principles of natural or revealed religion, the righteousness of the policy which has, for such an object, lavished this immense treasure.

Our last war with Great Britain was undertaken to obtain from her the renunciation of “the right of search.” After spending hundreds of millions of dollars, throwing away thousands of valuable lives, and producing wide-extended destruction of property and credit by the stoppage of our trade,

the burning of our towns, and the capture of our vessels, we at length concluded a treaty of peace, *without having gained the object for which all this expenditure was incurred*. We failed to obtain the recognition of the principle for which we fought. But “we obtained *glory*,” say the defenders of this barbarous, wasteful, and anti-christian policy. And *what is this glory*, that outweighs to a nation the value of hundreds of millions of dollars and the lives of thousands of its citizens—that can make us forget or overlook the wasted treasure, the shed blood, the bitter tears, the corrupted morals, the blasted hopes, the helpless orphans, the desolate widows, that follow in the train of war? Our glory consists simply in this—we succeeded in convincing mankind that, when the British vessels met ours in conflict upon the ocean, *sometimes they struck their flag to us, and sometimes we struck our flag to them*;—that, when their soldiers met ours on the field of carnage, *they as often fled before the charge of our bayonets as we fled before the charge of theirs!!* The world has been made to see that in *brute courage—in pure bull-dogism, we are at least equal to the British—perhaps their superiors!* Here, truly, is an object worthy of all our blood and treasure—here is *glory enough for rational and immortal beings!!!*

Our Florida war furnishes another illustration of the cost of sin. This war, waged against a feeble tribe of a few hundred Indians, has already cost our government twenty millions of dollars—a war undertaken to enforce the validity of a treaty extorted from an unwilling and dependent people—a war, in which, (to use the impious language of a defender of similar atrocities once perpetrated on ourselves,) we “have availed ourselves of the means which God and nature have put into our hands,” by *hiring hundreds of savage mercenaries to hunt down their unfortunate brethren, guilty only of the crime of loving and defending their homes and the graves of their fathers.*

4. *National rectitude is promotive of national intelligence.* The labor and ingenuity of man are far more than sufficient to supply all his physical wants; and if the intellect of a people is not highly developed, their condition is attributa-

ble not to a deficiency of means, but to the waste of their means upon unworthy objects. Intelligence, indeed, and wealth properly applied, reciprocally produce each other. Wealth fosters and stimulates intellect, while intellect, as it expands, discovers new and superior processes for the creation of wealth. Whatever, then, perverts and wastes national resources, enfeebles and dwarfs the national mind by destroying the means of its nutriment.

Now every nation has squandered in a single war, undertaken from no defensible motive, means sufficient to constitute the most ample fund for a permanent system of universal education, of a far higher order than has ever yet been projected. The sums expended, every year, even during peace, to keep up preparations for war, amount, in most nations, to, at least, five or six times as much as would be necessary to support a system of universal and most thorough popular instruction. Even *our* war-system, economical as we suppose ourselves to be, and limited as is our military establishment, costs us, during a period of peace, a far larger annual amount, than would educate, in a superior manner, all the children in our country.

Does any one, however, say that there exists a *necessity* for this wasteful policy, and that it cannot therefore be considered as opposed to morality? There exists *just such a necessity* as urges an individual to move through society encumbered with bowie knives and percussion pistols, that he may be able, in a moment, to spill the blood of any one who may chance to wound his sensitive honor, or threaten him with the slightest molestation. The day will come, in which nations will no longer tolerate this absurd and immoral waste of millions of their money, annually, merely to secure themselves from those *imaginary wrongs called insults*, or even from those real infringements upon their valuable rights, which, experience teaches us, are more often settled satisfactorily by negotiation than by appeals to arms. The day will certainly arrive, in which we will feel that national disgrace consists, not in being swindled out of five millions of dollars by the dishonesty of a foreign power without taking up arms to recover our debt; but in permitting hundreds of thousands of our children to grow

up uneducated, without due efforts to imbue them with knowledge—in which we will esteem it *folly* to plunge into a war that would probably cost us *an hundred millions* for the recovery of a debt of *five*; but *wisdom* to expend such a sum, in securing to all future generations, in our land, the benefits of an enlarged and virtuous education. Nations will not always squander for *glory*, what might elevate their offspring to *intelligence*. Contempt would follow the father who would dazzle the eyes of his neighbors by the display of a costly equipage, while he penitiously starved the bodies of his children at home, or stinted them in their means of intellectual growth;—and the day will come, in which principles of judgment will be applied to the conduct of nations, similar to those by which we now condemn the act of such an individual.

Let us take another instance of the mind-smothering influence of an unjust course of policy. The British constitution aims at securing to a privileged class a perpetuity of honors and wealth. The natural effect of this unrighteous system is, to remove, in a great degree, from the lower class, the stimulus to effort, by diminishing the chance of success, and to convert them into the mere drudges and burthen-bearers of the higher order. Property is engrossed by a comparatively small set, and control over the legislation of the country is lodged in the same hands—as a natural consequence, extravagant expenditures are often incurred for objects utterly disconnected from the real interests of the bulk of the people, while upon *them* is thrown a disproportionate share of the heavy taxation, which necessarily follows governmental extravagance. Thus a large portion of the people, oppressed by taxes, and destitute of resources except such as are derived from their daily labor, are kept struggling for a bare existence, with neither motives nor means to procure for themselves or their children, the opportunity of mental culture. Nor does this system work to the intellectual advantage of even the favored few. Mental advancement is not promoted by the removal of all necessity for exertion. The British House of Lords compares disadvantageously with our American Senate—and even those of its members who best uphold its respectability, have almost all fought their

way up to the aristocratic rank from a lower sphere of life. Healthful blood, from an inferior class, must be occasionally infused into the veins of an aristocracy debilitated by over-nurture, to save it from utter imbecility.

In our own country, we see that the existence of a servile class retards the progress of knowledge. In those sections in which an unjust policy has degraded human beings into property, the sparseness of a free population renders the establishment of a general system of education a *difficulty that has never yet been overcome*—perhaps we may say it renders it *an impossibility*. The early-acquired habits of the young, in such a state of society, are also generally repugnant to those salutary restraints of discipline, without which the best education cannot be given: and even if *all the superior class* could be imbued with a proper share of learning, the necessary and unmitigated ignorance of the *slave population* would render *the community as a whole*, greatly inferior in the amount of its intelligence to a community of equal size, all whose members were free and participated in the advantages of instruction. In its best condition, a slaveholding community must present, in its intellectual aspect, the appearance of a globe, one of whose hemispheres must be always shrouded in darkness.

5. *The observance of the principles of justice, in their public acts and institutions, promotes private morality and religion among a people.* The happiness of man depends far more on internal than external causes—“The mind is its own place, and in itself, can make a Hell of Heaven, a Heaven of Hell.” When a nation is composed mainly of virtuous and pious individuals, who strive to do unto others as they would that others should do unto them, who look up affectionately to God as their father, relying on his help, asking of him the blessings which they need, and expecting an eternal and blissful home in the mansions which his love has prepared—*that nation cannot but be happy.* They possess the most essential element of enjoyment—that for whose absence nothing can compensate—that whose presence atones for the absence of all things besides. Can you make a man who is se-

cure of immortal bliss, unhappy, by the loss of earthly enjoyment?

“What slave unblest, who, from to-morrow’s dawn  
Expecta<sup>s</sup> an empire? he forgets his chain,  
And, throned in thought, his absent sceptre waves.  
And what a sceptre waits us! what a throne!”

Can you make *immortal* man happy by bestowing on him all earthly enjoyment? As well attempt to light up the earth with tapers, in the absence of the sun—or water it without assistance from the clouds of the sky. The anticipated brightness of heaven throws a radiance over the darkest scene—confidence in the love and protection of God fills the soul with composure under the most harrowing calamities—and the fountains which are at God’s right hand *even now* yield real delight, though we may feel that earth’s springs are for us forever dried up. The Almighty himself has, indeed, guaranteed the happiness of a people that serve him,—“Blessed,” says he, “is that nation whose God is the Lord.” “God is in the midst of them they shall not be moved. God shall help them, and that right early.”

Every act or system of national policy, whether relating to our domestic institutions or our foreign relations, exerts a powerful though indirect influence on the principles and private conduct of our citizens. If the policy be virtuous and noble, it elevates them—if it be immoral, it depraves them. The operation of it is easily traceable. Those who manage affairs of state are placed in conspicuous and honorable stations—they are, from their official character, supposed to be men talented and upright, whose wisdom and integrity fit them to be guides to their fellow men. The measures, too, which they originate and conduct, are vastly more momentous than the transactions of private life. The principles, then, which these men adopt and apply, in the prosecution of their great schemes for furthering national interests, recommend themselves to the adoption of the mass of mankind, by every consideration that usually sways their judgments. The talents, station, and reputation of the supporters of these principles *recommend* them—while the greatness of the interests involved, *gives them universal notoriety*, as well as forbids the idea that they would be ap-

plied without the most mature deliberation, and the fullest conviction of their soundness and value. Thus immoral principles, embodied in public acts, often become part of the popular creed, shaping, in some measure, the character and conduct of almost every individual. When, however, the principles are so clearly detestable that no force of authority can blind the most ordinary understanding to their real character, their adoption in measures of public policy, though it cannot give them the color of virtue, still shields them from disgrace—perhaps the most dreaded temporal punishment of vice. The delinquents are too high and too numerous to be visited with contempt—rank, talents, and numbers bear them up, and give a fictitious respectability to their principles. The odiousness of vice is lessened by thus stripping it of its shamefulness. When the most distinguished men, acting in behalf of a community, perpetrate an act of immorality, without the rebuke or disavowal of those whom they profess to serve, acts similar in principle, perpetrated by individuals, will cease to be disreputable—thus shame, one of virtue's best auxiliaries, is driven from her side. A government exercises over the individuals it controls, somewhat of a parental influence—and could we expect the members of a family to regard the obligations of honesty and truth, when they saw the parent, to whom they looked up as a model, breaking his promises, and appropriating by violence or fraud the property of others?

We have recently seen a large and powerful tribe of aborigines emerging fast from barbarism, acquiring a written language by the astonishing and unaided genius of one of its own untutored sons, fostering education, establishing a press for the diffusion of information, desiring the instructions of christian teachers and contributing to their support, accumulating property, and rapidly adopting the usages of civilized life—We have seen one of our sovereign States ejecting this people from their homes, seizing upon their lands with all their improvements, parcelling out and distributing these lands by lottery among their own citizens, compelling their victims to exchange the ground inherited from their fathers, the houses constructed by their own hands, and the property gathered around

them for a far-distant and unimproved country which they had never visited, in which no preparation was made for their reception, and which they could only reach at the expense of much suffering and many lives—all this we have seen, *without hearing any allegation of crime against the helpless oppressed*, for they had never been found in hostile array against the white man, but had fought by his side; and *without hearing any claim of right on the part of the oppressors*, that morality would not blush to present. What must be the effect of such a public act on the private morals of the community among whom it is perpetrated? Can any thing be conceivied which would tend more powerfully to destroy conscience and legitimatize robbery—to impress every individual with the conviction that all love to our neighbor is either hypocrisy or fanaticism, and that the rights of others are to be respected only when they cannot be trampled upon with impunity?

We receive or imagine that we receive an insult from a neighboring nation. At the cost of thousands of valuable lives and millions of dollars, we proclaim war to avenge the injury and soothe our wounded pride. Can we expect that individuals will ever cease to arm against the lives of those who insult *them*, as long as their nation sanctions, on fields of carnage, the atrocious principle that stains upon honor must be washed out in blood? Does not every argument, which could be addressed to an individual to expose the absurdity and criminality of his course, show still greater folly and guilt attached to the course which his country publicly justifies and pursues? Do you ask him what injury he has sustained that can compare with the disastrous consequences, which, even if successful, he must bring upon himself and his family? But what, on the other hand, is the harm inflicted on a nation by a trifling disrespect or a contemptible expression of malignity, on the part of a foreign power, compared with the evil of sending woe into thousands of families for the loss of parents, brothers and husbands—of wringing from toil and penury, by heavy taxation, their hard earnings, to meet the immense expenditures of a system of wholesale robbery and murder—of supporting a body of rational and moral beings, trained and set apart for the sole busi-

ness of maiming and killing others, against whom they have no cause of complaint, and towards whom they cherish no animosity?

The divine lawgiver prohibited the hire of a harlot from being received in contribution for the service of his sanctuary; while, in some heathen countries, prostitution was licensed by law, and encouraged within the precincts of their temples, as a source of revenue to their impure deities. The one system dignified licentiousness by admitting her as the handmaid of religion—the other increased the natural odiousness of a detestable vice by pronouncing its gains too infamous to be used for a holy purpose. The effects corresponded with their causes: chastity was observed and respected among the Jews—among those heathen it was almost unknown. Yet we find, often, in christian States, the proceeds of lotteries and liquor-licenses—*the avails*, in other words, of *gambling* and *drunkenness*—*consecrated to education!* The adoption of such a system displays more than the pelican's fabled affection for her young—*she* robs herself of her *blood* to sustain the *lives* of her offspring,—*we* rob ourselves of our *morals* to enlarge the *intellects* of ours. Some of the districts of ancient Persia were called by the names of the respective parts of the queen's apparel, to the furnishing of which, their revenues were specifically appropriated;—thus one region was known as the queen's girdle, another as her turban. On this principle of nomenclature, the venders of liquor might, with propriety, in some of our States, dignify their grog-shops with the title of *fountains of knowledge*. They might urge men to patronise their establishments on *patriotic principles*, and get drunk for the *good of the rising generation*.

Does it not, now, seem strange that men so dupe themselves as to imagine that national interests can be promoted by an unrighteous policy, when such a policy requires, for its successful issue, that the Almighty should not only forbear directly to punish, and should wink at man's iniquities—but that he should even suspend the laws of nature, forbid effects to flow from their appropriate causes, and roll backward the ordinary course of events, to protect vice and do honor to disobedience?

Is the declaration of the Ruler of the Universe *true*, that “wisdom has length of days in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor”—that “her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace?” Does *an individual* verify its truth, when, in his small sphere, engaged in petty occupations, and aiming at inconsiderable personal ends, he acts in accordance with its spirit; and shall *united millions* find it false, when engaged in acts which spread weal or woe over a country, perhaps over a world, and extend in their consequences to remote generations? The life of man is subject to so many accidents, which may bring it to an abrupt and premature close, that, in regard to *an individual*, it cannot be always certain, that he will, in this life, “reap as he has sowed;”—he may not live long enough to eat of the fruit he has planted: but a *nation’s* existence, running, as it does, through many generations, is sufficiently prolonged to give scope for natural causes to work out their full and remote effects; so that of nations we may predict, with certainty, that “their sins will find them out.” Temporary benefit, with ultimate and greater loss, is, indeed, so *invariably characteristic* of injustice, as to have been, by some philosophers, mistaken for its *essence*. How, then, can a nation hope for impunity in crime? And how can we expect permanent prosperity, while our policy is deviating more and more from that path of rectitude in which men, *as men*, whether acting unitedly as families and nations, or isolatedly as individuals, are bound to walk?

#### YOUNG GENTLEMEN OF THE UNION LITERARY SOCIETY,

The voice of flattery is melodious, and men naturally delight in its soothing tones. Orators avail themselves of this infirmity, and our national greatness and virtue—our exalted eminence over all other people, are so frequently and glowingly portrayed, as to have almost persuaded us that “we are perfect and have need of nothing.” The sound of their own praises is so familiar to the ears of our countrymen, that all allusions to their faults are discordant and offensive. I might have chosen a more pleasing theme on which to address you—but I could not have chosen one more useful. This perpetual self-laudation is

sickening and disgusting—and we are in danger of fostering a national vanity, that will make us ridiculous for our self-sufficiency, our pretensions, and our sensitiveness—that will effectually arrest our improvement, rivet our prejudices, perpetuate our immoralities, and bring down upon us judgments corresponding to the magnitude of our offences against the laws of heaven. We *may be—perhaps we are*—the wisest and best people on the earth; but if so, *earth has very poor specimens of national wisdom and virtue to exhibit*. We are far off from perfection—and our deficiencies furnish us with a stronger incentive to humility, than our attainments to pride. We would be more wisely employed in discovering and removing those plague spots, symptomatic of decay and dissolution, which are here and there showing themselves upon us, than in admiring and adoring the lovely image of our own perfections as held up to us in the flattering speeches of interested and time-serving orators—imitating the conduct of the fabled youth we read of in classic story, who sickened and died of self-love from contemplating his image in a brook. We *can* improve—we *ought* to improve—and I trust we *will* improve, until we present the world with a living picture of a truly exalted people. Providence has bestowed upon us every natural advantage which can give conspicuity and lustre to moral worth. Our extended territory, with its diversified and copious productions, will sustain a population of many millions; while our numerous rivers and far-stretching coast will enable us to carry our traffic and the knowledge of our character and institutions to all the nations of the earth. In the lapse of a few generations, the time will come, when our forests will have disappeared, our present wildernesses be converted into gardens, our hills penetrated for ore or clothed with flocks, all our valleys covered with corn, our cities and villages so thickly studded over the land that the smoke of their fires will be visible from one to the other—when the Rocky Mountains will look down upon our Eastern and Western coasts alike densely peopled, and when our population will be computed by *hundreds of millions*. Then, if our policy in these intermediate years, shall have been heaven-directed and righteous, the throne

of God will be *established* in the midst of us, and there will arise, from this land alone, a thicker cloud of incense and a louder song of praise, than have ever, at one time, ascended from earth to heaven. The holy calm of the Sabbath will rest unbroken upon every hamlet, and village, and city of an almost entire and populous continent. The temples of Jehovah will be crowded with millions of grateful worshippers, while our “peace will flow like a river, and our righteousness like the waves of the sea.” And who can calculate the effect of our example on the world, as our many-winged commerce will, year after year, waft to all the kindreds and tribes of men, the knowledge of our character and our condition—our policy and our prosperity?

Will not each of you, my young friends, lend his efforts to realize this picture? The hour will come to each of you, in which those objects that seduce men from the path of rectitude will lose their charms—in which wealth and fame will be felt to be emptiness and vanity;—in that trying hour, while you are lingering on the confines of two worlds, with the visions of the one fading away and the scenes of the other acquiring distinctness and reality—in that hour, and through the eternity on which you will then enter, it will be a consolatory and hallowed recollection, that you employed your talents and influence, not to injure, but to bless your country—not to deprave, but to amend mankind. You and your compeers, the youth of this land, can knock off the shackles which impede the movements of this young and mighty Republic, and can enable her to rise to the pinnacle of true greatness. Will you suffer yourselves to be perverted from so noble an object, by the intrigues of party and the low aims of personal ambition? Or will you, as citizens and statesmen, aim at your country’s moral glory—her true happiness? Were half the energies which are now wasted in partizan labors—in the struggles of able and ambitious men for political power and distinction,—consecrated to the cause of righteousness, our country would be redeemed from political corruption,—her free institutions would be perpetuated,—her wealth would be augmented,—her intelligence would be advanced,—her morals would be purified,—her reli-

gion would be deepened,—and her character would shine forth before the eyes of mankind benign in its beauty and luminous in its glory. It was a lofty sentiment uttered by Danton, the Titan of the French Revolution,—a man whose capacious soul was darkened by scepticism, agitated by passions, and polluted by crime—but occasionally lit up and expanded by flashes of true nobility,—it was a lofty sentiment he uttered, when, in the hour of France's danger, he exclaimed in the convention, “let my name be blighted, let my country be free.” May a similar sentiment pervade your bosoms—and may you ever be ready to sacrifice your personal glory to the good of mankind.





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